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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is to establish job training and employment assistance programs for economically disadvantaged youth and hard-to-hire, unskilled adults. Like the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), JTPA works through a locally based program delivery system. Unlike CETA, JTPA calls for equal responsibility between the private and public sectors for making fundamental decisions about local program operations. Under JTPA vocational education will have a vital role in training and retraining programs for the unemployed and economically disadvantaged. JTPA administration is the responsibility of each state's governor who divides the state into service delivery areas (SDAs). Each SDA appoints a Private Industry Council. Therefore, vocational education can be represented potentially on several levels and have a more active role in determining how training funds will be spent. Through its state advisory councils vocational education can work closely with other local public agencies in the new partnership with private business. Some cooperative arrangements between the public and private sectors have focused on meeting demands of the changing workplace. Steps needed to build successful partnerships include conducting needs assessments, identifying resources, choosing partners, and establishing working relationships. (YLB)

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OVERVIEW

ERIC® DIGEST NO. 36

Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

What Is the JTPA?

The purpose of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982 is to establish programs to help prepare economically disadvantaged youth and hard-to-hire and unskilled adults to be productive members of the labor force. The new act replaces the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973. Like CETA, the new legislation works through a locally based program delivery system to provide training and employment assistance to the unemployed (National Alliance of Business 1982). However, unlike CETA, JTPA calls for equal responsibility between the private and public sectors for making fundamental decisions about local program operations. Other features of the JTPA include the following:

1. JTPA recognizes the need to use private sector expertise, resources, and support in order to tailor publicly financed training programs to the local economy (Galloway 1984).

2. JTPA represents a shift from the U.S. Department of Labor to the State level of such functions as local plan approval, fiscal oversight, and program performance activities (National Alliance of Business 1982; Galloway 1984; Riffel 1984).

3. JTPA gives local public and private authorities maximum flexibility to decide on the types of program assistance to be provided with Federal funds (Griffin 1983).

4. JTPA emphasizes spending most funds for training, backed up by limited portions of local funds for administrative expenses, wages, and other supportive services (National Alliance of Business 1982; Griffin 1983; Riffel 1984).

5. JTPA suggests, but does not require, that the States vocational education board and advisory council on vocational education be represented among the decision-making authorities (Riffel 1984).

What Is the Role of Vocational Education under the JTPA?

Under the new act, vocational education will have a vital role in training and retraining programs for the unemployed and economically disadvantaged. However, JTPA's administrative structure, which gives the State and local authorities a choice in the direction of employment and training policies, makes it differ substantially from its predecessor, CETA (National Alliance of Business 1982; Riffel 1984).

Training services will be delivered locally through agreements between the public and private sectors. However, the administration of the new act is the responsibility of the State's Governor (National Alliance of Business 1982; Riffel 1984). The Governor divides the State into service delivery areas (SDAs). Each SDA appoints a Private Industry Council (PIC). Members of each PIC are selected from the private sector, local education agencies, institutions of higher education, and private and proprietary organizations (Riffel 1984). Vocational education can thus be represented potentially on several levels and can have a more active role in determining how training funds are to be spent on the local level.

JTPA represents a new era of collaboration between vocational education and the private sector in providing job training for the unemployed. Through its State advisory councils, vocational education can work closely with other local public agencies in the new partnership with private business. The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (1983) suggested the following seven general areas of cooperation for State advisory councils:

- Providing established, effective training with efficient and nonduplicative use of tax dollars
- Providing services and expertise in training program support, such as counseling, administration, curriculum development, instructor development, and enrollment procedures
- Providing high-quality instructional facilities and equipment
- Developing lines of communication with private sector employers and with eligible program participants
- Providing information on local labor market statistics and training needs
- Assisting in the formation of Service Delivery Areas for communities with a population of less than 200,000
- Assisting the development of State and local cooperative education agreements and the development of coordinated State training plans

These areas of collaboration place vocational education in a central role in providing the services and programs intended

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in the new act to increase the employability of the disadvantaged. The administrative structure of the new law requires vocational education representation on the PICs, which serve a primary function in the planning and operation of community training programs. The local vocational education agencies, along with other private and public institutions, will be full partners in delivering training and employment services and ensuring the success of local training programs. Griffin (1983) and others note that this new type of partnership will build on existing collaborative relationships with the private sector and strengthen the vital role of vocational education in future training programs.

What Are Examples of Cooperative Arrangements?

The new legislation was passed during a period when both vocational education and business were in great need of cooperation. Today's technology is continually changing the workplace. New job skills and knowledge are needed to keep the future work force current with the changing vocations.

One example of how the new public/private partnership can meet the demands of the changing workplace is the relationship between the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and the Allen-Bradley Company, a Milwaukee-based manufacturing firm (Rich 1983). MATC provides training programs for computer-based information processing, engineering, and manufacturing technologies. Since Allen-Bradley is dramatically increasing its computer-assisted design and production operations, many of its employees attend classes at MATC. Because of the continuous change in computer graphics technology, MATC must keep its facilities, equipment, and instructional staff updated. Allen-Bradley and other contributors are responding to MATC's needs by donating hardware, hiring MATC instructors to give them workplace experience, and providing funds to develop new courses.

Another example of cooperative arrangements between the public and private sectors is the case of the Elliott Training Center in Westmoreland County, 30 miles outside Pittsburgh (Schweder 1983). The training center was started in 1973 by the Elliott Company, part of the Power Sector Group of United Technologies Corporation. Because of the 1973 business boom in manufacturing compressors and turbines for energy-related industries, the company needed about 200 skilled metal workers. To meet that urgent need, the Elliott Company consulted with the National Alliance of Business (NAB) to locate the initiation funds necessary for operating the new training center through the Federal Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (JOBS) program. The center's trainees are economically disadvantaged, hard-to-hire, and unskilled workers. Their tuitions have been paid by public agencies and nonprofit private enterprises (such as CETA, PICs, the Veterans' Administration) and physical rehabilitation programs (Schweder 1983). Steps needed to build successful partnerships such as these would include the following:

- **Conducting Needs Assessment**—Through self-evaluation and observation, each party should establish the areas that would benefit the most from the proposed cooperative efforts.
- **Identifying Resources**—The party in need of collaboration should receive information about sources of assistance and system support. During this phase, the services that may be offered in exchange for the collaborative assistance should be identified.
- **Choosing Partners**—With the problem defined and areas of need identified, the concerned party should choose a partner. The choice will be based on the adoptability of the new solutions, technologies, or service areas to the situations of the parties involved.
- **Establishing Working Relations**—After a solution has been developed and a partnership agreed upon, it needs to be diffused and adopted by the party and its supporting subsystems. By describing and demonstrating the solution, the change team enables the subsystems of each party to gain awareness, develop interest, and fully accept and use the new solution.

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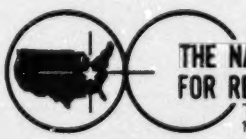

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